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Jordan

Development of Bret Harte as a Short Story  
Writer

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DEVELOPMENT OF BRET HARTE AS A SHORT STORY WRITER

BY

VERA ELIZABETH JORDAN

A. B. Drake University, 1909

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THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

IN ENGLISH

IN

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

1917





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UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

June 1 1917

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPER-  
VISION BY Vera Elizabeth Jordan

ENTITLED Development of Bretz Harte as a  
Short Story Writer

BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE  
DEGREE OF Master of Arts

H. G. Paul  
In Charge of Thesis

Mark W. Scott  
Head of Department

Recommendation concurred in:\*

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Committee

on

Final Examination\*

\*Required for doctor's degree but not for master's.

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## THE DEVELOPMENT OF BRET HARTE AS A SHORT STORY WRITER.

- I -

### Life

Francis Bret Harte was born at Albany, New York, August 25, 1836. In his ancestry may be traced a curious blending of English, Dutch, and Hebrew blood, which may account, in part at least, for his distinctly characteristic qualities. The Hebrew strain, which Lowell firmly asserts must be found in every great man, was bequeathed to Bret Harte through his paternal grandfather, Bernard Hart, (the e was added in the next generation) who was born in London, 1764, came to Canada a mere lad of thirteen and soon removed to seek his fortune in the promising America. Added to this Hebrew strain is the good English blood of Catharine Bret (or Brett) the first wife of Bernard Hart. This union did not prove a happy one; and in a year, or less, the wife was left with their small son, Henry Harte, the father of Francis Bret Harte, or, as the world knew and loved him, Bret Harte.

Henry Harte, though of a rather irresponsible and restless nature, was a well-known scholar and Professor of Greek in the Albany Female College. His wife, Elizabeth Ostrander, of a prominent Dutch family which had early (1659) settled on the Hudson, was a woman of keen analytical powers combined with forcible common sense. Thus the lad grew up surrounded in his home by refining



influences and an atmosphere of literature; but because of his delicate health he was barred from the active sports of boyhood.

Almost instinctively he became an absorbed reader of the classics of Shakespeare, Dickens, Goldsmith, Cervantes, and Washington Irving. We are not surprised, therefore, to learn that, under these influences and following a probable natural inclination, at the age of eleven he wrote a poem, Autumnal Musings, which was published in the New York "Sunday Atlas". But the youthful ambition was quickly repressed by the wise mother who undoubtedly realized the boy's dormant talent.

In 1845 the untimely death of Henry Harte left the young widow and her four small children dependent upon the generosity of the Ostranders and Bernard Hart. Bret, therefore, left school at the age of thirteen and was self-supporting before he was sixteen. The struggling little family, induced by the promises of the new Western land, drifted with the tide to California. They reached San Francisco, in 1854, after a long, tiresome journey by the Nicaragua route. The only real knowledge we have of this tedious experience, we may derive from the suggestions in The Crusade of the Excelsior: -

"It was the 4th of August, 1854, off Cape Corrientes. Morning was breaking over a heavy sea, and the closely-reefed topsails of a barque that ran before it bearing down upon the faint outline of the Mexican coast. Already the white peak of Colima







showed, ghostlike, in the east; already the long sweep of the Pacific was gathering strength and volume as it swept uninterruptedly into the open Gulf of California.

"As the cold light increased, it could be seen that the vessel showed evidence of a long voyage and <sup>stress</sup>/of weather. She had lost one of her spars, and her starboard davits rolled emptily. Nevertheless, her rigging was taut and shipshape, and her decks scrupulously clean. Indeed, in that uncertain light, the only moving figure besides the two motionless shadows at the wheel was engaged in scrubbing the quarter-deck -- which, with its grated settles and stacked camp-chairs, seemed to indicate the presence of cabin passengers. For the barque Excelsior from New York to San Francisco had discharged the bulk of her cargo at Callao, and had extended her liberal cabin accommodations to swell the feverish California immigration, still in its height. Suddenly there was a slight commotion on deck. An order, issued from some invisible depth of the cabin, was so unexpected that it had to be repeated sternly and peremptorily. A bustle forward ensued, two or three other shadows sprang up by the bulwarks, then the two men bent over the wheel, the Excelsior slowly swung round on her keel, and, with a parting salutation to the coast, bore away to the northwest and the open sea again."

Bret Harte landed "a mere boy, without money or prospects,



without trade or profession".<sup>1</sup> Under such conditions his education was completed. The Spaniard, the Greaser, the Chinaman; the miner, the desperado, as his unconscious instructors, stamped upon his impressionable heart and mind a living panorama of the romantic new land. His knowledge had come to him at first hand, and not through the medium of books; for in this transitory school the thoughtful young student unconsciously absorbed the atmosphere of the motley band of migration, in its picturesque life, manners, talk, scenery and ideals.

During this liberal education, he made a thorough study of the living whirlpool before him; on the frontier, in the gambling house, the dance hall, the warehouses where the trunks<sup>2</sup> of forgotten "49'ers" were sold at auction; where sudden deaths and acts of humor, courage or chivalry made up the routine of the ordinary day.

A lack of definite purpose in his wanderings, and a naturally restless, inquiring nature has, once at least, proved beneficial to the man and the world at large. In his various driftings Harte served his apprenticeship as a gold-miner, school-teacher, express messenger, drug clerk, type-setter, and newspaper reporter. Through these experiences he became a part of the life of the land, and each in turn served him well; later they gave him a golden store-house of materials whose rich resources never failed him; for his memory was as impressionable as wax, but as retentive

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1. Merwin, The Life of Bret Harte. p. 219, Boston, 1911

2. Bret Harte, Out of a Pioneer's Trunk.





as steel. As he tried his hand at mining he studied in intimate contact the wild frontier life; to his somewhat unsuccessful teaching we are indebted for some of his most delightful and lasting characters; while he was pouring over the dusty type case, stick in hand, vivid pictures persistently flitted through his mind, and his brain was busied in planning such of his earliest local sketches as: The Boy's Dog, Side-Walkings and From a Balcony. These were written at the instigation of Joe Lawrence, the editor of the Golden Era, in 1857, who offered young Harte a dollar a column.

As these unsigned efforts began to attract attention he was asked "to lay down the stick and take up the pen" in behalf of The Californian. To this magazine he submitted a series of clever parodies on the methods and styles of famous contemporaries which a little later appeared under the title of Condensed Novels.

In this new western world, naturally the surroundings with the riotous life; passions, virtues, and vices, indelibly fixed themselves in the very soul of the young man. California was teeming with strange types and characters; Pikes, Greasers, Spaniards, Yankees, Chinese; gamblers, adventurers, desperadoes from everywhere soldiers of fortune, convicts, and weary restless men, seeking for excitement and gold. As one follows Harte's varied career, it is clearly evident that he knew by personal experience almost every phase of California life. In Bohemian Days in San Francisco, we





see a vivid picture of his own youthful experiences: -

"Hordes of strong men clad in red shirts, high boots, striving against each other in the wild fight for gold; all young and muscular men, for no old men or semi-invalid could have borne the roughness and fatigue of the life. I remember an elderly man -- he was fifty perhaps, but he had a grey beard -- and he was pointed out as a curiosity and men turned to look at him as they would have looked at any other 'familiar object'." Another phase of this pioneer life is revealed. He tells us of a night he spent in a new hotel. After he had gone to bed he was suddenly awakened by an uproar -- scuffling, shouting and pistol shots. In the morning he entered the bar-room where he found the landlord with a swollen eye, and court plaster from cheek to forehead. Harte spoke to the owner: - "Well, landlord, you had rather a lively time here last night." "Yes, came the answer, "it was rather lively." "Do you often have such lively times about here?" queried Harte. "Well, no, the fact is, we've only just opened yer, and last night was the first time that the boys seemed to be gettin' really acquainted."<sup>1</sup>.

When Bret Harte first joined the western tide he tried his luck for gold; he prospected, shovelled, worked side by side with the quaint picturesque people, he afterwards described so accurately. He gave up the pick and shovel to assume the duties of the express

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1. Merwin, Life of Bret Harte. p. 132



messenger; he guarded the gold, greenbacks and letters entrusted to him by the camp miners. He made friends with the Easterner, the old Spanish grandee and his lovely daughter, the "Heathen Chinese", the professional gambler, the reckless, ready miner. Even the quaint, suggestive names which still linger in our memory: Piety Flat, Poverty Hill, Red Dog, Sandy Bar, Rough and Ready, are true to the life of the times.

Had not this realistic depiction of his life in the west won him a place of pre-eminence, his persistent, painstaking habits of writing, alone, should have helped to give him high rank. However rough may have been his western experiences, his instinct for refinement and luxury is marked. It has been told that he was unable to work unless the writing materials, light, heat and even furniture suited his mood. In personal appearance he bore no mark of the pioneer. Joaquin Miller, an early friend and co-worker on the Golden Era, gives us this portrait of him:

"I found a spare, slim young man, in a chip hat and summer dress of the neatest, nattiest cut, who took me cordially into his confidence at once. I liked his low voice, his quiet, earnest and unaffected manner from the first. He had neat editorial rooms, where he made me welcome, although he was then engaged as Secretary in the Mint..... I think he was the cleanest man I ever met. He was always as clean, modest, and graceful of speech as a girl."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Erskine, Leading American Novelists. p. 333, New York, 1910





It is in daily round of writing and rewriting, for the Golden Era and Overland Monthly, endeavoring to produce only the best, we learn to know Bret Harte the man as well as the writer. From these lines of Charles W. Stoddard, a co-worker and personal friend, we see the artist at work, and realize the mental effort with which he perfected his labors:

"One day I found him pacing the floor of his office in the United States Branch Mint; he was knitting his brows and staring at vacancy -- I wondered why. He was watching and waiting for a word, the right word, the one word of all others to fit into a line of recently written prose. I suggested one; it would not answer, it must be a word of two syllables or the natural rhythm of the sentence would suffer."<sup>1</sup>.

While thus engaged in writing for the Golden Era in 1862 he was married to Miss Anna Griswold, a daughter of Daniel S. Griswold of New York City. In San Francisco, after his marriage, he lived a rather quiet life as Secretary of the Mint; and at the same time pursued his literary career. Though he was now a man with a family, it was no part of Bret Harte's dream to relieve himself of financial difficulties by tendering to the public an unfinished production. The effort required to portray his life-like pictures was by no means small; work at all times had to be done in a

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<sup>1</sup>Merwin, Life of Bret Harte. p. 42





minutely careful manner -- his word pictures were slowly and all the while skillfully drawn; a thousand words<sup>1</sup>. a day was probably the limit, but these were added conscientiously day by day. Many pages were wasted in setting the first few lines. When he was satisfied with these the picture gradually grew until the close where much time and thought was expended on his characteristically brief endings.

Gradually the California life had grown distasteful to Bret Harte; the early reckless days of the West were passing; the life was becoming uncongenial to the artist. He had lingered long enough; he felt the hour of his departure had struck; though many of his friends and associates agreed with C. W. Stoddard when he said: -

"When Harte left California in 1871, he left it betimes; he took with him about all that was worth taking, and the California he once knew, and surely must have loved, lives forever in his pages. It no longer exists in fact; but for him, in another generation, it would have been forgotten..... His experience in New England weighs little in the balance with his experience in California; his experience abroad even less. It was California, and early California -- and let me say picturesque California -- that first appealed to

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1. Pemberton, Life of Bret Harte. p. 297, New York, 1903



him, and through him to all the civilized nations in their several tongues."<sup>1</sup>.

He left San Francisco, with his family, in February 1871, a heralded and distinguished man, where but seventeen years before he had landed, a mere lad, without money, trade or profession. The mother who had so much influence upon his early life and literary inclinations was now dead; his brothers and sisters were living successful lives here in the West.

Bret Harte now made his home in New York, where he was immediately lionized by his clamoring readers. He became a regular contributor to various magazines; especially in the pages of the Atlantic Monthly the early California world lived again. During his seven years' residence in the Eastern States he did not deal with the life of his new surroundings. Soon after his arrival in the East he was urged to give lectures on the early Californians; he very reluctantly prepared a lecture entitled The Argonauts, for the purpose of relieving his serious financial difficulties, for in spite of fame and success he was not able to make "ends meet".

Upon reading a letter to his wife, dated Lawrence, Kansas, October 23, 1873, one can easily see his utter distaste for the project, and even a faint touch of his home affairs and family,

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1. Pemberton, Life of Bret Harte. p. 113





concerning which so little is known:

"My dear Anna, -

I left Topeka early yesterday morning, but did not reach Atchinson, only sixty miles distant, until seven o'clock at night -- an hour before the lecture. The engine as usual had broken down, and left me at four o'clock fifteen miles from Atchison, on the edge of a bleak prairie with only one house in sight. But I got a saddle-horse -- there was no vehicle to be had -- and strapping my lecture and blanket to my back I gave my valise to a little yellow boy -- who looked like a dirty terra-cotta figure -- with orders to follow me on another horse, and so tore off towards Atchison. I got there in time; the boy reached there two hours later.

"I make no comment; you can imagine the half sick, utterly disgusted man who glared at that audience over his desk that night, and d.....d them inwardly in his heart. And yet it was a good audience, thoroughly refined and appreciative, and very glad to see me. I was very anxious about this lecture, for it was a venture of my own, and I had been told that Atchison was a rough place -- energetic but coarse. I think I wrote you from St. Louis that I had found there were only three actual engagements in Kansas, and that my list which gave Kansas City twice was a mistake. So I decided to take Atchison. I made a hundred dollars by the lecture, and it is yours, for yourself, Nan, to buy 'Minxes' with, if you want, for it is over and above the amount Eliza and I footed upon





my lecture list.....

"I've seen but one (woman) that interested me -- an old negro wench. She was talking and laughing outside my door the other evening, but her laugh was so sweet and unctuous and musical -- so full of breadth and goodness that I went outside and talked to her while she was scrubbing the stones. She laughed as a canary bird sings -- because she couldn't help it. It did me a world of good, for it was before the lecture, at twilight, when I am very blue and low-tuned. She had been a slave.

"I expected to have heard from you here. I've nothing from you or Eliza since last Friday, when I got yours of the 12th. I shall direct this to Eliza's care, as I do not even know where you are.

Your affectionate

Frank."<sup>1</sup>

At this time the friends of Harte, especially the late Charles A. Dana, procured for him through President Hayes the appointment as United States Commercial Agent at Crefeld in Prussia. In 1878 leaving his family at Sea Cliff he went to take up his new duties. These shortly proved irksome; his life here was not happy, so through the kindly influence of friends at home and abroad, in 1880 he was removed to Glasgow. Here he made many warm friendships,

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1. Merwin, Life of Bret Harte. p. 242 - 44



both in his work and in his travels. His literary inspirations increased and the best of his foreign stories were produced at this time. After his removal from the consulate at Glasgow in 1885, due to a change of Administration in the States, Bret Harte made his home in London with his very good friends M. Arthur and Mme. Van de Velde, whom he had met during his frequent trips to the metropolis.

His reasons for refusing to return to America have been satisfactorily explained by his biographer H. C. Merwin: -

"The chief cause was probably the pecuniary one, for by living in England he was able to obtain more from his writings than he could have obtained as a resident of the United States. He continued to contribute to the support of his wife, although after his departure from this country Mrs. Harte and he did not live together. The cause of their separation was never made known. On this subject both Mr. Harte and his wife maintained an honorable silence, which it is to be hoped, will always be respected."<sup>1</sup>

In regard to his writing, as he was at the beginning so he continued to the end, planning, altering, perfecting. In California we have the picture of him bending over his desk in the little office at the San Francisco Mint, slowly and carefully drawing the sketches for which the world pronounced him master. It is exactly the same picture we see forty years later at his last work in London, at the English country house, where he was ever a welcome

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1. Merwin, Life of Bret Harte. p. 279





guest. The pen that fell from his tired fingers had been writing and rewriting the single opening sentences of his last story.

In London, on the morning of May 5, 1902, while sitting at his desk, a sudden hemorrhage of the throat came upon him. Though he rallied from this, a second attack came quickly; and late in the afternoon he quietly passed away at the home of Mme. Van de Velde, far from home ties and native land. He was buried in the quiet Frimley churchyard "within sound of the rustling pine-trees, and in the heart of a country he knew and loved well. His quiet graveside has already drawn many pilgrims, and it may confidently be predicted that as the years roll by their number will increase"<sup>1</sup>.

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1. Pemberton, Life of Bret Harte. p. 341





## The Short Story

The short story is by no means a new form of writing. From the very beginning of systematic composition there have been productions to which the name might be applied; the Book of Ruth, written about 450 B.C., is essentially a short story. But the first recognition given it as a distinctive class of literature came in 1842, when Poe's criticism of Hawthorne<sup>1</sup> awakened people to a greater interest in the technique of the new form of fiction. The present short story is primarily an American product of the 19th century, owing its life and essence to the work of Irving, Hawthorne and Poe. In England, Stevenson and Kipling have been regarded as founders of the modern short story; Zola, de Maupassant, and Daudet in France; Tolstoi in Russia.

The short story is properly named when it refers to a short prose narrative which portrays artistically a bit of life. One must understand from the first that it is not a "cut down novel". The novel aims to give a large portion or the whole of some particular life or lives; the short story is but a particular part of a life, a fragment which is merely suggestive of the whole. The primary object is to amuse; though it may at the same time

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1. Harrison, J. A. Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe. New York, 1902



depict a character, paint a locality, enforce a moral, or plead a cause. The material should consist of but a single situation, very few subdivisions, and very seldom an underplot. The more stirring and unusual the incident, the more poignant the style and method.

The first step in the production of the short story is the careful gathering and selection of materials. A natural storyteller finds his materials waiting for him everywhere; daily experiences are running over with them. "To test a Berlin system, Mark Twain deliberately threw away his street-car ticket fifteen times and each time was required to pay his fare. He made \$500.00 from the story based on this simple incident."<sup>1</sup> After the material is gathered the eye and hand of the true artist can reject the superfluous or non-essential and retain only the striking and suggestive details. There is no artistry in recopying the dull commonplaces of everyday life. For, as Stevenson tells us: -

"A short story is not a transcript of life, to be judged by its exactitude, but a simplification of some side or point of life, to stand or fall by its significant simplicity."<sup>2</sup>

Again, in the construction of the short story the motive requires careful consideration. The sources of possible motives are

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1. Albright, The Short Story. New York, 1909

2. Albright, The Short Story.





as numerous as they are diverse; actual experience frequently offers especially good motive; for here the author deals with facts as he knows them, and is thus able to present a realistic picture. Some of our best short story writers: Richard Harding Davis, Octave Thanet, and Jack London, have based on their own novel experiences some of their most effective stories. Likewise, presentation of a mood motivates many of the stories of Kipling, de Maupassant, Hawthorn and Harte. The portrayal of contrast, emotions, and sentiments offers many opportunities for motives which have been successfully treated by a great number of short story writers.

In planning the motive of a story an important thing to be remembered is the presentation of setting. This "consists of the circumstances, material and immaterial, in which the characters are seen to move in the story. Its elements are time, occupations, and conditions."<sup>1</sup>. The setting may be rich in local color -- to show the characteristic surroundings of a certain district -- it is especially well handled if it exercises a vital bearing on the natures and destinies of character. Poe has very skillfully brought this out in the setting of The Fall of the House of Usher. But local color should never be made the whole or chief interest of the story; rather should it be woven into the very fabric until it is an essential, though not a predominating part. Any descriptive passages, which do not directly influence the plot or characters, act merely as clogs in the presentation of the writer's ideas.

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1. Eisenwein, Writing of the Short Story. Springfield, Mass., 1912



But a judiciously selected setting has real story value. ( A unique setting accompanied by unique characters may make the entire story; many of the tales of Kipling, Cable, Sarah Orne Jewett, and Bret Harte, exemplify this.)

At present<sup>time</sup>, it is very evident that plot acts as a primary requisite in building up the story. The story teller may offer many word pictures and graphic scenes; but there is no life or fire in them unless certain characters are introduced fashioned from real life. In these scenes they must move and live as human beings. Complexity of plot is highly undesirable, (that is left for the novel) but a simple plan of action is necessary. Without this preconceived framework, known technically as plot, the parts of the story would not hold together. Here proportion and sequence of events play a vital part in the structure of the story. This must be so evenly balanced that the steady heightening of interest is scarcely noticeable, until it results in a skillful climax.

In the construction of the plot, essential elements in the mechanicism are the introduction and conclusion. For, in the brief space allotted to the short story, the first and last impressions are very important; through these the vivid memory lives. The normal introduction may combine a statement or suggestion of time, place and events; grouped in a forcible and an interesting manner, according to the method of a particular author. It is a difficult thing to rescue a beginning from dullness, and "it takes experience





to teach a writer that he may boldly cut his goods close and leave the edges raw, without ornamental bindings or wrought fringes at the ends."<sup>1</sup>. A splendid example of this experienced daring is found in Poe's unusually fine beginnings of The Pit and the Pendulum, and The Fall of the House of Usher. Likewise, in preparing for the ending, it is not necessary to place signals of warning, or give the reader a hint of a deliberate scheme. The effect should be cumulative; the conventional ending should be carefully avoided. Climax and conclusion make up the ending, and if skillfully handled, the problems are solved, the narrative terminated, and relations between reader and teller "artistically severed".

In the technique of the plot, the short story requires the greatest care; for it lacks the mass of the novel which hides minor defects. The careful observance of tone, and harmony of atmosphere produce the needful unity of impression which is so fundamental to the life of the story. It is here the careful choice of an effective title may do much to augment this feeling of coherence.

In developing the plot the successful story writer must expend much careful thought upon his characterization. Just at this point, it is well to remember that very few great short story writers have satisfactorily developed characters. "Character portrayal is the business of the short story writer, realistic character develop-

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1. Albright, The Short Story.





ment that of the novelist."<sup>1</sup>. The proportion of description given to the character depends on the method and style of the author, and the requirements of the story. In The Man Who Would be King, notice how few details of appearance Kipling gives us, yet how easily we see the finished picture. Nevertheless, there are times when a careful, minute description is needed to convey the story, as in Irving's perfect full-length painting of "Ichabod Crane" in The Legend of Sleepy Hollow. Added to the skillful painting is Irving's felicitous gift of naming his characters.

The skillful short story writer presents character not only through effective descriptions and explanation, but he makes them talk and act in a very lifelike manner. This naturally involves the test of the story teller in his skill in use of dialogue. Is it real, not merely possible; does it convince the reader? Some one has defined dialogue as "composition which produces the effect of human talk". In carrying out this conception of its function, the writer must select, combine, alter, and invent snatches of conversation which will have a direct bearing on his characters and situation.

In making a careful study of the short story, one is surprised to learn it was some time after the War of the Rebellion before a writer seems to have recognized that the impressionistic

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1. E. A. Cross, The Short Story. Chicago, 1914



short story was fitted to express American subjects. We were slow in declaring our intellectual independence; our literary men usually fashioned after English models and ideas.<sup>1</sup> The technique established by Poe<sup>2</sup> was first applied to distinctively American life by Bret Harte. Through his skillful and original combination of Poe's emotional effects, the individual situations of Hawthorne, and pervasive atmosphere of Irving, he helped establish the normal method of the present day American short story. Thus he stands as a notable figure in our national literature; he gave to us the short story of a single effect and single situation in a truly American setting. The sketch was no longer necessarily devoted to extreme romance or moral analysis, but a means for the portrayal of American life. In depicting and preserving this life he never forgot the journalistic command: "be striking; be interesting".

Harte was the first eminent successor of Poe and Hawthorne as a story teller, and, though he followed their leadership, he was a master in his own school of the modern short story. Here he truly laid the foundation of his fame in The Luck of Roaring Camp; it acted as the turning point of his career. Before this had appeared his experimental sketches, slightly tinged with the spirit of

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1. Bradford Torrey, Friends on the Shelf. Boston, 1906

2. Harrison, J. A., Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe. New York, 1902





Dickens; now he is unrestrained and pictures life as he knows it. In this story we see a graphic picture of the life Bret Harte knows so well. "There was commotion in Roaring Camp. It could not have been a fight, for in 1850 that was not novel enough to have called together the entire settlement. The ditches and claims were not only deserted, but 'Tuttle's grocery' had contributed its gamblers, who, it will be remembered, calmly continued their game the day that French Pete and Kanaka Joe shot each other to death over the bar in the front room. The whole camp was collected before a rude cabin on the outer edge of the clearing..... The assemblage numbered about a hundred men. One or two of these were actual fugitives from justice, some were criminal, and all were reckless. Physically they exhibited no indication of their past lives and character. The greatest scamp had a Raphael face, with a profusion of blonde hair; Oakhurst, a gambler, had the melancholy air and intellectual abstraction of a Hamlet; the coolest and most courageous man was scarcely over five feet in height, with a soft voice and an embarrassed, timid manner. The term 'roughs' applied to them was a distinction rather than a definition. Perhaps in minor details of fingers, toes, ears, etc., the camp may have been deficient, but these slight omissions did not detract from their aggregate force. The strongest man had but three fingers on his right hand; the best shot had but one eye."



In his essay on The Rise of the Short Story, Harte has described the genius of his own art, and proclaimed it as an American product. He puts the matter thus: "While the American literary imagination was still under the influence of English tradition, an unexpected factor was developing to diminish its power. It was humor, of a quality as distinct and original as the country and civilization in which it was developed. It was at first noticeable in the anecdote or 'story', and, after the fashion of such beginnings, was orally transmitted. It was common in the bar-rooms, the gatherings in 'the country store', and finally at public meetings in the mouths of 'stump orators'. Arguments were clinched and political principles illustrated by a 'funny story'. It invaded even the camp meeting and the pulpit. It at last received the currency of the public press. But wherever met it was so distinctly original and novel, so individual and characteristic, that it was at once known and appreciated abroad as 'an American story'. Crude at first, it received a literary polish in the press, but its dominating quality remained. It was concise and condensed, yet suggestive. It was delightfully extravagant, or a miracle of understatement. It voiced not only the dialect, but the habits of thought of a people or locality. It gave a new interest to slang. From a paragraph of a dozen lines it grew into half a column, but always retaining its conciseness and felicity of statement. It was a foe to prolixity of





any kind; it admitted no fine writing nor affectation of style; it went directly to the point. It was burdened by no conscientiousness; it was often irreverant, it was devoid of all moral responsibility, but it was original! By degrees it developed character with its incident; often, in a few lines, gave a striking photograph of a community or a section, but always reached its conclusion without unnecessary words. It became -- and still exists as -- an essential feature of newspaper literature. It was the parent of the American 'short story'."1.

In making a careful study of Bret Harte's short story, it is well to see how closely he has followed the requirements set down by the early teachers, and what his originality has contributed toward making him a "Pioneer of the Modern Short Story", for one feels that he deliberately planned to add a new type to American literature and to develop a peculiarly characteristic form.

First, in gathering materials, he evinces the sure touch of the artist. He instinctively knew the gold from the dross; he uses nothing that does not have some bearing on his motive. In the selection of his materials he has ever shown a true horror of the artificial, conventional, and tawdry; he had a natural craving for beauty of form as it is shown in The Transformation of Buckeye Camp:

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1. Cornhill Magazine. July, 1899, p. 132





"The tiny lights that had been far scattered and intermittent as fireflies all along the dark stream at last dropped out one by one, leaving only the three windows of 'Parks' Emporium' to pierce the profoundly wooded banks of the South Fork. So all-pervading was the darkness that the mere opening of the 'Emporium' front door shot out an illuminating shaft which revealed the whole length of the little main street of 'Buckeye', while the simple passing of a single figure before one of the windows momentarily eclipsed a third of the settlement. This undue pre-eminence given to the only three citizens of Buckeye who were still up at ten o'clock seemed to be hardly justified by their outward appearance, which was that of ordinary long-bearded and long-booted river bar miners. Two sat at the counter with their hands upon their knees, the third leaned beside the open window.

"It was very quiet. The faint, far barking of a dog, or an occasional subdued murmur from the river shallows, audible only when the wind rose slightly, helped to intensify their solitude. So supreme had it become that when the man at the window at last continued his conversation meditatively, with his face towards it, he seemed to be taking all Nature into his confidence."

✓In order to satisfy his desire for natural beauty, Harte has made himself a true artist in the selection of (striking and graphic details which constituted the every day life of the early



Western world. In this respect critics are wont to accuse the artist of using idealized materials; but, as one of Harte's critics has rightly said, "It is the business of art to idealize. Even at its best art is so inferior to nature, that in order to produce the same impression it has to intensify its effects; to deepen the colors, heighten the contrasts, omit an object here, exaggerate an outline there, and so on until it has produced the proper picturesque effect."<sup>1</sup> Harte felt the actual need of careful and accurate observation; he used his eyes, he watched the speech and actions of his fellows, studied their expressions, interpreted their desires until he was able to reproduce them upon the stage of his own creation.

In planning his plots, the complex or well-balanced forms did not assume proportions of a serious problem to our author. Accident, certainly, is allowed to play a large part in the solving of his simple, suggested plots; as in The Luck of Roaring Camp and In the Carquinez Woods. The unexpected catastrophe is the usual thing in Bret Harte; but a survey of the life of this western world shows us that in the mining camp accidents are normal. The author does not use fires, explosions, floods, tragedies, as a method of escape from the embarrassment of a complex plot, but as a common experience which must be presented to make the story ring true to this life of the unusual. The sympathetic reader soon learns to

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1. E. F. Andrews, Cosmopolitan. February, 1897





accept the calm philosophy of John Oakhurst in The Outcasts of Poker Flat: "life was at best an uncertain game and he recognized the usual percentage in favor of the dealer".<sup>1</sup> Harte's plots involve but a single action to depict a single incident, and he taught the world to value his delineation of true characters, more than skillfully planned episodes full of thrills and hair's breadth shudders.

One feels that Harte has struck straight and true in the dealing with the mechanism of the short story. Never has he failed to produce his desired effect in his beginnings. Before his skillful pen touched the paper the whole picture was mentally arranged. In doing this he has not attempted to soften the shadows in his pictures: -

"Where the great highway of the Sierras nears the summit, and the pines begin to show sterile reaches of rock and waste in their drawn-up files, there are signs of occasional departures from the main road, as if the weary traveler had at times succumbed to the long ascent, and turned aside for rest and breath again. The tired eyes of many a dusty passenger on the old overland coach have gazed wistfully on those sylvan openings, and imagined recesses of primeval shade and virgin wilderness in their dim perspectives. Had he descended, however, and followed one of these diverging

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1. Erskine, Leading American Novelists. p. 359



paths, he would have come upon some rude wagon track or 'log-slide', leading from a clearing on the slope, or the ominous sawmill, half hidden in the forest it was slowly decimating."<sup>1</sup> Or: -

"The Sage Wood and Dead Flat stage coach was waiting before the station. The Pine Barrens mail wagon that connected with it was long overdue, with its transfer passengers, and the station had relapsed into listless expectation..... The ostlers had slunk back into the stables, the station keeper and stage driver had reduced their conversation to impatient monosyllables, as if each thought the other responsible for the delay. A solitary Indian, wrapped in a commissary blanket and covered by a cast-off tall hat, crouched against the wall of the station looking stolidly at nothing. The station itself, a long, rambling building containing its entire accommodation for man and beast under one monotonous shed-like roof, offered nothing to attract the eye. Still less the prospect; on the one side two miles of arid waste to the stunted, far-spaced pines in the distance, known as the 'Barrens'; on the other an apparently limitless level with darker patches of sage brush, like the scars of burnt-out fires."<sup>2</sup>.

The wretchedness, the wildness, the unreality and extravagance of the primitive frontier life are as frankly sketched

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1. Bret Harte, A Phyllis of the Sierras.

2. Bret Harte, Dick Boyle's Business Card.





as the rough and ready chivalry and early romance. The Luck of Roaring Camp begins not in polished description, but a simple statement of the incident -- regardless of its romantic glow -- the birth of a child where there was no woman to attend "Cherokee Sal". From this simple, unaffected statement of a single situation for a beginning grows every element of the story. This straight-forward effective plane of beginning reappears in nearly all of his best stories.

Throughout the story the reader feels no conscious warning of the dénouement; it is carefully hidden by his masterly technique. As his completion of plot depends, mainly, on accidents, so his endings come suddenly and even unexpectedly. He makes no effort to fashion an artificially happy ending. The story has been told; there is no need or place for superfluous words; the picture is graphically finished. The conventional ending has no place in his repertoire of artistries; this is exemplified by the characteristic ending of Rupert's Christmas Gift: -

"That's all.

"No questions now -- never mind what became of the drum.

"Who's that sniveling?

"Bless my soul! Where's my pill-box?"

Another feature of the mechanism of the story which Bret Harte managed very successfully is setting. His scope was unrestricted; he tried the backgrounds of the foreign lands, the East and the West. And though he met with considerable success in





handling each of these, he has used the West more often and far more effectively. Of course local color has played the largest part in making the settings of Bret Harte memorable. It acts upon the story, like the staging of a play, and assumes a notable part in the realistic presentation of a picture; but it becomes more important when it actually forces the characters to certain decisive actions, as in the snowstorm in The Outcasts of Poker Flat, where an unnecessary detail would spoil the harmony of the effect. "Too much were worse than too little."<sup>1</sup> When the characters live, move, and have their being in the setting, the result is "atmosphere"; it is an effect felt and not seen. "Atmosphere gives value to the tones of fiction as in real life it does to the landscape."<sup>2</sup> )

His feeling for nature is very fine and genuine, as revealed in his use of setting in the lines: -

"But it happened to be a quiet, intense night, with the tremulous opulence of a full moon that threw quivering shafts of light like summer lightning over the blue river, and laid a wonderful carpet of intricate lace along the path that wound through the willows to the crest. There was the dry, stimulating dust and spice of heated pines from below; the languorous odors of syringa; the faint, feminine smell of southernwood, and the infinite mystery of silence. This silence was at times softly broken with the tender

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1. Esenwein, Writing of the Short Story. p. 151  
2. Esenwein, Writing of the Short Story. p. 152



inarticulate whisper of falling leaves, broken sighs from the tree-tops, and the languid stretching of awakened and unclasping boughs."<sup>1</sup>

This real love for nature is shown in many of his brief word pictures; for example, in A Lonely Ride: -

"I could see the distant horizon, defined by the India-inky woods relieving a lighter sky. A few stars, widely spaced in this picture, glimmering sadly. I noticed again the infinite depth of patient sorrow in their serene faces; and I hope that the Vandal who first applied the flippant 'twinkle' to them may not be driven melancholy mad by their reproachful eyes. Something of this calm and solitude crept over me, and I dozed in my gloomy cavern."

Moreover, it is in the setting of The Outcasts of Poker Flat that we are made to see the West and its people that Bret Harte knew: -

"The road to Sandy Bar -- a camp that, not having as yet experienced the regenerating influences of Poker Flat, consequently seemed to offer some invitation to the emigrants -- lay over a steep mountain range. It was distant a day's severe travel. In that advanced season the party soon passed out of the moist, temperate regions of the foothills into the dry, cold, bracing air of the Sierras. The trail was narrow and difficult. At noon the Duchess, rolling out of her saddle upon the ground, declared her intention of going no farther, and the party halted.

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1. Bret Harte, The Bell ringer of Angels.





"The spot was singularly wild and impressive. A wooded amphitheatre, surrounded on three sides by precipitous cliffs of naked granite, sloped gently toward the crest of another precipice that overlooked the valley. It was, undoubtedly, the most suitable spot for a camp, had camping been advisable."

To this mastery of atmosphere and tone, Harte added a unique skill in character portrayal, so that his works resemble a veritable gallery of portraits. Just how far Bret Harte drew from life is an open question. His own statement regarding the matter reads as follows: -

"My stories are true, not only in phenomena, but in characters. I do not pretend to say that many of my characters existed exactly as they are described, but I believe there is not one of them that did not have a real human being as a suggesting and a starting point. John Oakhurst, for instance, was drawn quite closely from life. On one occasion, however, when a story in which he figures was being discussed, a friend of mine said, 'I know the original of Oakhurst, the man you took him from'.

"'Who?' said I.

"'Young L --'

"I was astounded; as a matter of fact, the gambler as portrayed was as good a picture even to the limp, of young L --, as



of the actual original. The two men, you see, belonged to a class which had strongly marked characteristics, and were generally alike in dress and manner."<sup>1</sup>.

Here, indeed, we catch the secret of the power in Harte's best drawn characters; they are individual, and yet they are true to type; each is given his own speech and acts, yet each is marked as clearly by the mental and moral characteristics of his class as he is by his dress. For Bret Harte had lived with his models and thoroughly knew them. All of his paintings are clearly and vigorously done. The masterly drawn character of Yuba Bill, "the most fearless and grimly humorous of stage coachmen", is unrivalled in the great gallery of Bret Harte's portraits.<sup>2</sup> Nor is Harte's range of characters limited to the miner, the stage coach driver and the gambler. No writer has drawn children with more sympathy, subtlety and tenderness than our kindly story teller. He seemed to understand and appreciate the irresponsibility and innocence of childhood, and he has often flashed before us such pictures of the child's heart as the following from A Waif of the Plains: -

"Kla'uns', said the girl.

"The boy, without turning his head, responded, 'Susy'.

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1. Pemberton, Life of Bret Harte. p. 98

2. Pemberton, Life of Bret Harte. p. 53



"'Wot are you going to be?' said the girl.

"'Goin' to be?' repeated Clarence.

"'When you is growed', explained Susy.

"Clarence hesitated. His settled determination had been to become a pirate, merciless yet discriminating. But reading in a bethumbed 'Guide to the Plains' that morning of Fort Laramie and Kit Carson, he had decided upon the career of a 'scout', as being more accessible and requiring less water. Yet, out of compassion for Susy's possible ignorance, he said neither, and responded with the American boy's modest conventionality, 'President'. It was safe, required no embarrassing description, and had been approved by benevolent old gentlemen with their hands on his head.

"'I'm goin' to be a parson's wife', said Susy, 'and keep hens and have things giv' to me. Baby clothes, and apples, and apple sass -- and melasses! and more baby clothes! and pork when you kill!

"She had thrown herself at the bottom of the wagon, with her back towards him and her doll in her lap. He could see the curve of her curly head, and beyond, her bare dimpled knees, which were raised, and over which she was trying to fold the hem of her brief skirt.

"'I wouldn't be a President's wife', she said presently.

"'You couldn't!'

"'Could if I wanted to!'





"'Couldn't.'

"'Could now!'

"'Couldn't.'

"'Why?'

'Finding it difficult to explain his convictions of her ineligibility, Clarence thought it equally crushing not to give any. There was a long silence. It was very hot and dusty. The wagon scarcely seemed to move. Clarence gazed at the vignette of the track behind them formed by the tail-board. 'Going to get down', he said, putting his legs over.

"Maw says 'No', said Susy.

"Clarence did not reply, but dropped to the ground beside the slowly turning wheels. Without quickening his pace he could easily keep his hand on the tail-board.

"'Kla'uns.'

"He looked up.

"'Take me.'"

Harte's natural gift of humor which brightens this story of the two little waifs, shows at its best, perhaps, in his delineation of Colonel Culpepper Starbottle. The reader never tires of meeting the funny, likeable, old gentleman, and willingly overlooks any of his weaknesses. In A Ward of Colonel Starbottles we see the old colonel at his best in his characteristic traits, for,



"that opportunity was not thrown away on Colonel Starbottle. Stepping up to the desk of the astounded principal he laid the points of his fingers delicately upon it, and, with a preparatory inclination of his head towards her, placed his other hand in his breast, and with an invocatory glance at the ceiling began.

"It was the colonel's habit at such moments to state at first, with great care and precision, the things that he 'would not say', that he 'need not say', and apparently that it was absolutely unnecessary even to allude to. It was therefore not strange that the colonel informed them that he need not say that he counted his present privilege among the highest that had been granted him."

In some of his best stories. Bret Harte has not felt it necessary to bring in the love element; rather has he relied upon capturing and holding his reader's interest through his skill in character delineation. This is aptly illustrated by The Luck of Roaring Camp and Tennessee's Partner. As to his heroines, they stand before us almost as clearly as if in the flesh and blood. We know they are beautiful; every subtlety of coloring is fully appreciated by Harte; "Who but Bret Harte has really described the light which kindles upon the face of such a woman as 'Yerba Buenas' whose strangely delicate complexion had taken on itself that faint Alpine glow that was more of an illumination than a color."<sup>1</sup>.

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1. Bret Harte, A Ward of the Golden Gate.





We fully admire his schoolmistress in The Idyl of Red Gulch with her white skirts gathered about her, fleeing from temptation; and the beautiful womanly figure of Rose of Tuolumne, as she flew to her bleeding sweetheart with "the cry of a mother over her stricken babe, of a tigress over her mangled cub".

As one sees these characters, it is rather amusing to imagine Bret Harte attempting to admire a woman who does not have small feet, and dark hair and dark eyes. "M'liss" is one of his favorite dream children; while he seems to have an antipathy for the conventional woman of the world. It is probably due to this feeling of his that we learn to know the unredoubtable "Miggles".

In depicting his characters, both women and men, Harte frequently and successfully resorts to the use of dialect. This device helped to individualize his characters, and at the same time suggested the tone of the environment. His enviable mastery of dialect was a natural outgrowth of his keen observation of manners, and his ready sympathy with his fellow beings. His Spanish-English mixed with California slang will always ring in our memory. Is there anywhere a more exquisite bit of dialect than when Enriquez Saltello speaks: -

"To confer then as to thees horse, which is not -- observe me -- a Mexican plug. Ah no! you can your boots bet on that. She is of Castilian stock -- believe me and strike me dead! I will myself at different times overlook and affront her in the stable,



examine her as to the assault, and why she should do thees thing."<sup>1</sup>.

In the same way he has mastered alike the dialect of the Prussian, the German,<sup>2</sup> and the Scotch,<sup>3</sup> and given them to us accurately. Who could be more German than Peter Schroeder when he "pondered long and perplexedly. Gradually an explanation slowly evolved itself from his profundity. He placed his finger beside his nose, and a look of deep cunning shone in his eyes. 'Dot's it,' he said to himself triumphantly, 'dot's shoost it! Der Rebooplicans don't got no memories; ve don't got nodings else'."

What now, in concluding our survey of Harte's mastery of the short story, shall onesay of his rank as a writer in this form. Let us apply for a moment the standard established by one of the sanest thinkers concerning this form of the story teller's art. In the exposition of The Short Story, E. A. Cross<sup>4</sup> has interestingly set forth the merits of the story writer: -

"The short story writer must be impressionistic. He must be swift, choosing one or two incidents near the culmination of the novelist's series, and merely hinting at the other incidents of the series and the other people involved, he must produce a convincing impression of the truth of his theme."

One intuitively knows Bret Harte has more than met these

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1. Bret Harte, The Devotion of Enriquez.
  2. Bret Harte, Peter Schroeder.
  3. Bret Harte, Young Robin Gray.
  4. E. A. Cross, The Short Story, p. 21



requirements. Not a superfluous word is to be found; every incident stands forth with graphic power; places and characters are endowed with actuality; the close comes without moral or comment. Withal he was an artist of impulse who painted with unfading colors but one dramatic incident of the life of a community, and left the rest in darkness.





Harte and his Master -- Dickens.

In examining the forces that helped fashion Bret Harte's apprentice work, the student is at once impressed by the paramount influence of Charles Dickens. True, many of the Californians earlier stories resemble the tales of Irving, in idiom and in the use of atmosphere and setting. But while Harte learned something from Irving, he never caught the hall mark of the older writer's style -- that delightful, leisurely, gentlemanly style of writing. In a word he admired Irving, but he loved Dickens.

Bret Harte's youthful worship of Dickens which never began at the early age of seven when he read Dombey and Son. As he wavered or waned with the passing years, dwelt long and lovingly over the pages of the English novelist, he unconsciously absorbed the style and methods which he employed in some of his early stories. It is rather difficult to make a definite estimate of the influence, for Dickens takes high rank as a novelist, and Bret Harte is pre-eminently a short story writer.

It is possible that Bret Harte derived more benefit than harm from his youthful admiration of the master. His boyish imagination was stirred and stimulated; and the keen sympathy for the unfortunate, the waifs, the outcasts, easily discernible in Dickens, is reflected in Harte as he gives us the picture of Western life. As he has taken, so has he bestowed; for in the



inspiration received from the great master, Bret Harte in turn has given a like gift to Kipling.<sup>1</sup> However, for originality of subject matter, finish of portrayal and charm of style, Harte is indebted to his own alert and ingenious mind. "When Bret Harte nodded he wrote like Dickens, but the better stories, and the greater majority of the stories show no trace of this blemish. At his best, indeed, Bret Harte was perhaps as nearly original as any author in the world."<sup>2</sup> In fact, it is only when Harte attempts the novel that we may feel he is consistently like Dickens, and there it is unfortunately in his worst forms; as in the extravagant, unnatural speech of Jack Hamlin against a 'servant', intimating that he would forcibly dislodge certain vital and necessary organs from the porter's body.<sup>3</sup>

In making a study of the influences of Dickens upon Harte, let us consider in the first place the use of settings. In both men, one can see the reality of the surroundings softened or heightened, as the case may need, with the glow of the artist's romanticism. In many cases the reality has been colored by the author's vision. Here Dickens has had no great effect upon our story teller, whose backgrounds are unique. He used actual surroundings known to him through his personal experience, as school teacher, stage driver

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1. Merwin, Life of Bret Harte. p. 342

2. Merwin, Life of Bret Harte. p. 342

3. Bret Harte, Gabriel Conroy.





and gold-miner; surroundings that no other writer had tried as yet to portray forcibly, while the scenes and incidents of Dickens were well known in the English novel.

The strong didactic spirit, the desire to right wrong, which permeates the work of the master, has been put aside by the pupil, save as he wishes to point out the good that exists in everyone. There is, of course, a marked resemblance in their optimism and humanitarism; but even here a difference may be noted in the handling of their beliefs, for Dickens usually takes upon himself the fortunes and personalities of his characters, and carried the thoughtful reader with him, while Harte looks upon his people as a dramatist, shifting and altering their fortunes and lives to make an effective climax for his play.

The touch of Dickens has not made a deep imprint on Harte's style. For he has shown usually a vigorous freshness and crispness in the well-turned phrase and deftly handled colors, wholly independent of any writer or book. An exception must be made, however, in the case of the little sketch High Water Mark which noticeably reveals the spirit of Dickens in its somewhat stilted phrasing and lengthy descriptions,<sup>1</sup> which are not at all characteristic of the real Bret Harte. Occasionally he becomes involved in a pompous and pretentious manner, and makes his characters seem out of place as in

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1. Bret Harte, High Water Mark. vol. I, p. 323



Susy and A Secret of Telegraph Hill.

Furthermore, one misses the earnestness and sincerity of the older artist; while Harte seemed to feel the inadequacy of the style, to portray his surroundings and characters, and thus gradually evolved a style of his own -- compressed, rapid and effective.

As we trace the influences farther, we feel there is a greater similarity between master and pupil noticeable in the plot-building than any other one thing. Here the younger writer has followed closely in the steps of the older, though he never hesitated to turn aside, at any time, to strengthen the structure through his own originality. Neither of these artists is very skillful in the building of the plot; each one has used backgrounds and accident to aid materially in building his story. Both are able to see the dramatic force in a powerful situation, and to build their plans about this framework. They know equally well how to mingle humor, pathos, sentiment, exciting incident, melodrama, character sketch and humanitarian appeal.

The theatrical element, so noticeable in such scenes as the death of Nancy in Oliver Twist, finds its parallel in Harte's denouement of The Luck of Roaring Camp. It would seem that their sole purpose of plot was to present effective scenes and situations. While in most points of plot-making Harte has followed Dickens, he has deviated considerably in his brief original endings. He has not cared to make exclusive use of the never-failing "poetic justice" of Dickens. His endings are touched with a vivid reality in place of





the happy dream-like ending of his early teacher.

Although Harte has built up his entire social system of picturesque and unusual characters, he has not shown the sympathy of Dickens, for Harte always maintained an objective attitude toward his characters; Dickens, on the other hand, felt that strong personal interest and attachment that led him to walk the rainy streets of Paris repeating: - "Paul Dombey is dead! Paul Dombey is dead!" Bret Harte is as coldly impersonal in his writings as Maupassant.<sup>1</sup> Yet so skillfully are his characters portrayed that they stand out before us as flesh and blood people. Their vividness seems as great as the more minutely drawn and carefully described people in Dickens-land.

In regard to peculiarities of style, we find a number of the affectations of Dickens are persistently used by Harte; the repeated use of the "split infinitive"; the misuse of gratuitous<sup>2</sup> is a truly Dickensque error and seems to have been willfully copied by the pupil. In Miggles, within a comparatively short space, he has used the word twice with a differing sense; "Yuba Bill" has noticed paralytic Jim's "expression of perfectly gratuitous solemnity"; later his own feature "relax into an expression of gratuitous and imbecile cheerfulness". Aggravation in the sense of irritation is used as consistently by Harte as by Dickens.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Maupassant, A Piece of String.

2. Merwin, Life of Bret Harte. p. 339

3. Merwin, Life of Bret Harte. p. 340





Even more important than the peculiarities of style, is the resemblance to be found in the feeling for sentiment, humor and pathos. Like Dickens, Harte has used his splendid powers of humor, not to caricature but to portray human life with all its seriousness, frivolities and incongruities. Though Harte avoided sentimentality, he was a master in handling sentiment, especially that kind of sentiment that blends humor and pathos. There are innumerable sentences, nay, even paragraphs where one reader laughs, another weeps -- here the mingled smile and tear are followed by the painful lump in the throat. In this respect he has almost surpassed his early master of the immortal Oliver Twist with its mingled fun and sadness. Can a more touching example of sentiment, humor and pathos be sketched by living artist than in How Santa Claus came to Simpson's Bar? As the boy Johnny greeted the Christmas guests in his thin weak little voice, and, after setting out the whiskey bottle along with crackers and cheese, crawled back into bed. He was thus accosted by Dick Bullen: -

"'Hello, Johnny! You ain't goin' to turn in agin, are ye?'

"'Yes , I are,' responded Johnny decidedly.

"'Why, wot's up, old fellow?'

"'I'm sick.'

"'How sick?'



"'I've got a fever, and childolains, and roomatiz',  
returned Johnny, and vanished within. After a moment's pause he  
added in the dark, apparently from under the bedclothes -- 'and biles'!

"There was an embarrassing silence. The men looked at  
each other and at the fire."

Harte's greatest success has been like that of Dickens,  
in describing what he sees and knows, and in so doing he reveals  
the touch of the older artist; both show the instinct to tell truths  
of human life, though they differ widely in their aims and ends. In  
Harte, however, romanticism hangs over the stern realism, like a  
hovering mist until the whole atmosphere is permeated with its  
essence. Bret Harte may be rightly called a literary offspring of  
Dickens in his first youthful attempts, but he lived and grew, and  
is remembered by his own painstaking originality. In his tender  
tribute offered upon the death of his loved master, we cannot but  
feel he was in some way trying to tell the world of his indebtedness  
to the great teacher. The simple lines are replete with humble  
gratitude: -

"The roaring campfire with rude humor painted  
The ruddy tints of health  
On haggard face and form that **drooped** and fainted  
In the fierce race for wealth.

Till one arose and from his pack's scant treasure  
A hoarded volume drew,  
And cards were dropped from hands of listless leisure,  
To hear the tale anew.

. . . . .





And on that grave where English oak and holly,  
And laurel wreaths entwine,  
Deem it not all a too presumptuous folly  
This spray of Western pine!"<sup>1</sup>.

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1. Bret Harte, Dickens in Camp.



### Change in Form and Development of Style.

Bret Harte's stories may be divided naturally and easily into three chronological groups -- (1) sketches written in California (2) those written in the East, and (3) those written in foreign lands. Even within these groups exist marked differences. In the first division may be included his experimental sketchings, such as M'liss, which are obviously in the manner of the master story teller Dickens,<sup>1.</sup> and the stories that grew from the triumphant success of his immortal The Luck of Roaring Camp; in the second group again appears a dividing line between the stories still drawn from his western inspiration and "his efforts to break new ground"; in the final group, though he has made some efforts (and admirably succeeded in these ) to portray short pictures of the life abroad, we find him inevitably turning back to his early love and inspiration -- California. He has made true his own proverb given to us by Tennessee's Partner: - "When a man has been running free all day, what's the natural thing for him to do? Why, to come home."

In his early experimental sketches we discern a tendency to follow all methods and forms; M'liss is a very good example of this with its not unusual romantic heroine, disreputable father,



typical villain, and the old abandoned mine. It is not until The Luck of Roaring Camp, closely followed by The Outcasts of Poker Flat and Tennessee's Partner, that Bret Harte came into his own. The long desired something new was found. These stories were not merely a success, but a veritable triumph in the East, for the Western man whose fame came overnight. His earliest tales, such as A Boy's Dog, Sidewalking, and M'liss, had created little effect; California was in them, but the readers did not feel it. Then he began anew; for he realized the true romance and stern reality of this Western whirlpool. The old forms were thrown aside; he had a new picture to portray; and the large canvas fashioned by his master Dickens was ill suited to his purpose. Very few artists have painted such a living picture on so small a canvas; he could tell the whole story, or sketch the whole state of things in very few words. The great trio of stories<sup>1</sup>, which emblazoned his name high among the rank of masters, each contains slightly more than 4,000 words. But in those few expressive words he has immortalized his great family of dream children in their strange surroundings.

Among the many traits marking these earlier stories, traits that persist throughout his entire work, one of the most noticeable is his power in touching all the sunny places in the lives of the

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1. Bret Harte, Luck of Roaring Camp.  
Outcasts of Poker Flat.  
Tennessee's Partner.





disreputable -- we learn of the hero to be found in every man; desperado, gambler, outcast. We have a sympathetic feeling for Jack Hamlin, John Oakhurst, "Stumpy" and "Kentuck". In all these stories we find "their pathos and humor are genuine, their actions intensely dramatic; their imaginative power of epic strength."<sup>1</sup>.

While it is undeniably true that his best remembered works were all produced before he was forty, it is also true that his later efforts were excellent, if judged by other standards than his California writings. However, upon his removal to the East and to Europe he did not know intimately the lives of the people;<sup>2</sup> hence he went back again and again to his old inspiration of the growing West; he repeated himself many times, giving us old familiar pictures in new poses. Doubtless many were surprised that his life in the great Eastern metropolis did not offer him a golden harvest of literary store. But his old material was still fresh and vigorous and in such constant demand that he had no time or desire to wander into new fields. The public wanted his tales of Western life, and feverishly clamored for more. It was thus that he returned to the old trails and led the willing readers along the path he had blazed in his pioneer sketches.

That he could on occasion do good work in new fields is attested by such tales as Thankful Blossom<sup>3</sup> which was a decided

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1. Pattee, American Literature. p. 395, Boston, 1896

2. Merwin, Life of Bret Harte. p. 246

3. The name is the true name of one of Harte's ancestors.  
Pemberton, Life of Bret Harte. p. 123



departure, and the flattering success it drew proves that if he had been allowed sufficient freedom by the public a new career might have opened for him.

His Scotch stories,<sup>1</sup> which rank among the best of his later work, show noticeably the influence of tone and surroundings of his life at Glasgow. Again we have glimpses of actual experiences and incidents in the English society life as we read The Desborough Connections and Ghosts of Stukely Hall. We believe a reading of The Devotion of Enriquez and The Passing of Enriquez, written while in England, with the effective mingling of the beautiful/<sup>Spanish</sup> and universal slang of California, will convince the most sceptical critic that the genius of Harte's youth has not become dimmed in his later years.

There appears a touch of pathos when we learn that in his last volume, Openings in the Old Trails, are faint reflections of the early pictures which have come from the hand of this gifted artist and story teller. In the opening story reappears one of the most effective and fascinating characters we have ever known, "the exquisite and absolutely original Jack Hamlin";<sup>2</sup> of whom we were so fond when we knew him in A Sappho of Green Springs: -

"Presently he was conscious of a melodious humming and a light leisurely step at the entrance of the hall. They continued on

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1. Lee, Young Robin Gray, A Rose of Glenbogie.

2. Current Literature 32:753 May, 1902





in any easy harmony and unaffected as the passage of a bird. Both were pleasant and both familiar to the editor. They belonged to Jack Hamlin, by vocation a gambler, by taste a musician, on his way from his apartments on the upper floor, where he had just risen, to drop into his friend's editorial room and glance over the exchanges, as was his habit before breakfast.

"The door opened lightly. The editor was conscious of a faint odor of scented soap, a sensation of freshness and cleanliness, the impression of a soft hand like a woman's on his shoulder, and, like a woman's, momentarily and playfully caressing, the passage of a graceful shadow across his desk, and the next moment Jack Hamlin was ostentatiously dusting a chair with an open newspaper preparatory to sitting down.....The editor did not look up until he had finished revising a difficult paragraph. By that time Mr. Hamlin had comfortably settled himself on a cane sofa, and possibly out of deference to his surroundings, had subdued his song to a peculiarly low, soft, and heart-breaking whistle as he unfolded a newspaper. Clean and faultless in his appearance, he had the rare gift of being able to get up at two in the afternoon with much of the dewy freshness and all of the moral superiority of an early riser."

When we turn to Harte's later works, we may miss the old buoyant enthusiasm and vivid forcible energy; but let us grant that



the hand of the master craftsman had grown wearied, for he had been a stern unrelenting self-task master who had spared himself nothing to give his readers a finished picture.

(In no other way has Harte shown so great a change as in the rapid development of style and technique) It is not difficult to discover the touch of Dickens in his early experimental sketches; but in the later and more original stories we see a finished style peculiar to Bret Harte. (Substance and style are almost inseparable). The style is so skillfully adapted to the idea he wishes to express that one can not imagine it as different. In other words, just as an artist must use certain distinctive colors to depict his interpretation of a picture, so Bret Harte creates his own style. As a story teller he has no successful imitator. (The individuality of his work makes imitation almost impossible) In his selection of materials he seemed to neglect no detail, or overlook any trifling incident that might give coloring or reality to his stories.

The style of his best stories is almost flawless in cameo-like clearness; for he affected no mannerisms, no slang, (except that natural to the lips of his various characters), no shopworn devices to mirror his phase of life. All the characters, incidents, speeches and situations seem to be true to the particular story; where humor, comedy, sentiment, pathos, melodrama jostle one another without discord. It was his gift to say the right thing in the right place.





Another characteristic of his style which cannot be overlooked is his resourceful vocabulary. Every peculiar, unusual, or technical expression was at his finger tips ready to be used in the most effective place. For example, when Joe Corbin had told Colonel Starbottle that he had sent money to the widow of the man he had killed in self-defense, the Colonel's characteristic reply was: -"A kind of expiation or amercement of fine, known to the Mosaic, Roman and Old English law."<sup>1</sup>. He has shown the keenest appreciation for delicate shadings in words. Indeed, to find a harsh or ungainly sentence would be quite impossible.

In his wonderful economy of thought and language, everything said or done contributes to his predetermined purpose. It was his intention to strike and arouse the senses of his readers through the dramatic crispness of his style just as a vivid and forceful painting awakens one. The artistically painted portrait is much better than a photograph, for it leaves out many useless and ineffective details and accentuates the best points.

Through his painstaking care Bret Harte has cultivated a mellow style, sometimes bordering on the sarcastic and ironical, but more often permeated with wholesome, vigorous humor. The terse economy of words, vivid forcefulness of style can hardly be equalled by the suggested picture sketched here: -

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1. Merwin, Life of Bret Harte. p. 337





"A long level of dull gray that further away became a faint blue, with here and there darker patches that looked like water. At times an open space, blackened and burnt in an irregular circle, with a shred of newspaper, an old rag, or broken tin can lying in the ashes. Beyond this always a low, dark line that seemed to sink into the ground at night, and rose again in the morning with the first light, but never otherwise changed its height and distance. A sense of always moving with some indefinite purpose, but always returning at night to the same place -- with the same surroundings, the same people, the same bedclothes, and the same awful black canopy dropped down from above. A chalky taste of dust on the mouths and lips, a gritty sense of earth on the fingers, and an all-pervading heat and smell of cattle. This was the 'Great Plains' as they seemed to two children from the hooded depth of an emigrant wagon, above the swaying heads of toiling oxen, in the summer of 1852!"<sup>1</sup>.

So skillfully has Bret Harte handled his medium that the reader does not detect in the smooth voluble style of his lines, the infinite amount of time and labor the author has bestowed upon these creations of his brain. There is no evidence of a workman's tools.

Another noteworthy characteristic of the author's style is his subtlety of observation -- he has never failed in giving

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1. Bret Harte, A Waif of the Plains, Chapter I



even the minutest details to enhance the beauty of his pictures. The forehead, temples, and eyebrows of his heroines are described with a care not to be found in another author. Even the eyelashes are carefully painted in his minute pictures:

Flora Dimwood "cast a side-long glance under her widely-spaced, heavy eyelashes". Again, as he portrays the child, Sarah Walker, we see "Her eyes were a dark shade of burnished copper, the orbits appearing deeper and larger from the rubbing in of habitual tears from long wet lashes". How carefully has he observed the real boy, as he has pictured him in A Phyllis of the Sierras, with these lines: -

"That precocious and gallant Lovelace of ten, despite all sentiment, had basely succumbed to the gross materialism of youthful slumber. On a cot in the corner, half hidden under the wreck of his own careless and hurried disrobing, with one arm hanging out of the coverlid, Richelieu lay supremely unconscious. On the forefinger of his small but dirty hand the missing cameo was still glittering guiltily. With a swift movement of indignation Minty rushed with uplifted palm towards the tempting expanse of youthful cheek that lay invitingly exposed upon the pillow. Then she stopped suddenly.

"She had seen him lying thus a hundred times before. On the pillow near him an indistinguishable mass of golden fur -- the helpless bulk of a squirrel chained to the leg of the cot; at





his feet a wall-eyed cat, who had followed his tyrannous caprices with the long-suffering devotion of her sex; on the shelf above him a loathsome collection of flies and tarantulas in dull green bottles, a slab of gingerbread for light nocturnal refection, and her own pot of bear's grease.....

"The sleeper stirred slightly and awoke. At the same moment, by some mysterious sympathy, a pair of beady bright eyes appeared in the bulk of fur near his curls, the cat stretched herself, and even a vague agitation was heard in the bottles on the shelf. Richelieu's blinking eyes wandered from the candle to his sister, and then the guiltily hand was suddenly withdrawn under the bed clothes."

No less noticeable than his mastery of the small but significant details of human life is his skillful use of minute details in nature. Such a scene as the following came straight from the heart of the California Rockies: -

"The way led through Grizzly Canon, by this time clothed in funereal drapery and shadows. The redwoods, burying their moccasined feet in the red soil, stood in Indian file along the track, trailing an uncouth benediction from their bending boughs upon the passing bier. A hare, surprised into helpless inactivity, sat upright and pulsating in the ferns by the roadside as the cortége went by. Squirrels hastened to gain a secure outlook from higher



boughs; and the blue-jays, spreading their wings, fluttered before them like outriders, until the outskirts of Sandy Bar were reached, and the solitary cabin of Tennessee's Partner."

Such are some of the chief characteristics of Bret Harte's writings. In conclusion, we may well quote Merwin's happy summary of the artist's style:

"Depth of feeling, subtlety of perception and intellect, these qualities supplemented by the sense of form and beauty, go far to account for the charm of Bret Harte's style. He had an ear for style, just as some persons have an ear for music, and he could extract beauty from language just as the musician can extract it from the strings of a violin."<sup>1</sup>

"If artistic repression, dramatic feeling, mingled humor and pathos, deft character drawing, a sure sense of a 'good story', and ability to win the reader in spite of himself,"<sup>2</sup> mark the style and ability of a genius, then surely Bret Harte deserves the name.

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1. Merwin, Life of Bret Harte. p. 338
  2. J. Berg Esenwein, Stories of Setting.



### Local Color.

To discuss intelligently Bret Harte's use of local color, the student must first consider that writer's conception of realism with which it is closely bound. To attempt a working definition, - Realism is fidelity to Nature and actual life; a representation without idealization. In the movement of literature it is a semblance of the real, and something more than a mere statement of fact; and may thus become artistic truth.

One of the most expansive definitions is given by William D. Howells: - "Realism is nothing more and nothing less than the truthful treatment of material, and Jane Austin was the first and last English novelist to treat material with entire truthfulness. We cannot label any splendid work of fiction romantic or realistic or even idealistic; for it has something of all these attributes. It is only a question of proportion."<sup>1</sup>.

The Realist and Romanticist, alike, assume the right of selection; though the realist naturally chooses the small, the more common in opposition to the romanticist who prefers the great and unusual.

Some of the greatest writers, in depicting the life they

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1. Albright, Criticism and Fiction. p. 73





know, have unconsciously used all three forms: Defoe, Swift, Thackeray, and Poe. The brevity of scope of the short story has saved it from the grosser phase of realism, and even greater ugliness of naturalism.

It is really the "twofold vein" of romance and realism which has made Bret Harte's stories works of art. He had an extraordinary power of observation and perfect memory joined with an enviable vigor of imagination, as he realistically portrayed environment. He was not a realist in the rigid sense of the word; his imagination is too great for that; but after reading H. C. Merwin's<sup>1</sup> careful descriptions of Pioneers and Pioneer life, one is convinced that Bret Harte has come very close to the real truth in depicting the surroundings of his stories, and we at once realize he has pictured truly the Pioneer's life with its touch of romanticism when he drew Jack Hamlin in Brown of Calaveras: -

"'Old Man', he said, placing his hands upon Brown's shoulders, 'in ten minutes I'll be on the road, and goin' like that spark. We won't see each other agin; but, before I go, take a fool's advice; sell out all you've got, take your wife with you, and quit the country. It ain't no place for you nor her. Tell her she must go; make her go if she won't. Don't whine because you can't be a saint and she ain't an angel. Be a man, and treat her like a woman. Don't be a d....d fool. Good-by.'

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1. Merwin, Life of Bret Harte. Chapters V and VI



"He tore himself from Brown's grasp and leaped down the stairs like a deer. At the stable door he collared the half-sleeping hostler, and backed him against the wall.

"'Saddle my horse in two minutes, or I'll ....'. The ellipsis was frightfully suggestive.

"'The missis said you was to have the buggy', stammered the man.

"'D...n the buggy!'

"The horse was saddled as fast as the nervous hands of the astounded hostler could manipulate buckle and strap.

"'Is anything up, Mr. Hamlin?' said the man, who, like all his class, admired the élan of his fiery patron, and was really concerned in his welfare.

"'Stand aside!'

"The man fell back, With an oath, a bound, and clatter, Jack was into the road. In another moment, to the man's half-awakened eyes, he was but a moving cloud of dust in the distance, toward which a star just loosed from its brethren was training a stream of life.

"But early that morning the dwellers by the wingdam turnpike, miles away, heard a voice, pure as a sky-lark's, singing afield. They who were asleep turned over on their rude couches to dream of youth, and love, and olden days. Hard-faced men and anxious gold-seekers, already at work, ceased their labors and





leaned upon their picks to listen to a romantic vagabond ambling away against the rosy sunrise."

Moreover, there are innumerable examples where Bret Harte has stayed close to reality; even in the small details of any incident, for instance, the escape of Martin Morse of In the Tules: -

"But one might be awakened with a start. His hand, which was hanging out of his bunk, was dabbling idly in water. He had barely time to spring to his middle in what seemed to be a slowly filling tank before the door fell out as from inward pressure, and his whole shanty collapsed like a pack of cards. But it fell outwards, the roof sliding from over his head like a withdrawn canopy; and he was swept from his feet against it, and thence out into what might have been another world! For the rain had ceased, and the full moon revealed only one vast, illimitable expanse of water! As his frail raft swept under a cottonwood he caught at one of the overhanging limbs, and, working his way desperately along the bough, at last reached a secure position in the fork of the tree."

Doubtless many of Harte's most lifelike and successful characters have many touches of his imagination, though made "out of the stuff of fact". He had the ability to write with his eye on the object -- he saw every pin and button, every line in the miner's face, every cottonwood tree and humble shanty; that was his realism. But he also had the way of idealizing things at times, of touching up the colors, of heightening the lights, sometimes of



being even a little mawkish is his sentimentality -- that was the romantic element in his work. The introductory picture of A First Family of Tasajara illustrates this: -

"'It blows', said Joe Wingate.

"As if to accent the words of the speaker a heavy gust of wind at that moment shook the long light wooden structure which served as the general store of Sidon settlement, in Cantra Costa. Even after it had passed, a prolonged whistle came through the key-hole, sides, and openings of the closed glass front doors, that served equally for windows, and filled the canvas ceiling which hid the roof above like a bellying sail. A wave of enthusiastic emotion seemed to be communicated to a line of straw hats and sou'-westers suspended from a cross-beam, and swung them with every appearance of festive rejoicing; while a few duster overcoats and 'hickory' shirts hanging on the side walls exhibited such marked though idiotic animation that it had the effect of a satirical comment on the lazy, purposeless figures of the four living inmates of the store.

"Ned Billings momentarily raised his head and, shoulders depressed in the back of his wooden armchair, glanced wearily around, said, 'You bet, it's no slouch of a storm', and then lapsed again with further extended legs and an added sense of comfort.

"Here the third figure, which had been leaning listlessly against the shelves, putting aside the arm of a swaying overcoat that seemed to be emptily embracing him, walked slowly from behind





the counter to the door, examined its fastenings, and gazed at the prospect. He was the owner of the store, and the view was a familiar one -- a long stretch of treeless waste before him meeting an equal stretch of dreary sky above, and night hovering somewhere between the two. This was indicated by splashes of darker shadow as if washed in with India ink, and a lighter lowlying streak that might have been the horizon, but was not. To the right, on a line with the front door of the store, were several scattered, widely dispersed objects, that, although vague in outline, were rigid enough in angles to suggest shed or barns, but certainly not trees.

"'There's a heap more wet to come afore the wind goes down', he said, glancing at the sky. 'Hark to that, now!'

"They listened lazily. There was a faint murmur from the shingles above; then suddenly the whole window was filmed and blurred as if the entire prospect had been wiped out with a damp sponge. The man turned listlessly away.

"'That's the kind that soaks in; thar won't be much teamin' over Tasajara for the next two weeks, I reckon', said the fourth lounge, who, seated on a high barrel, was nibbling -- albeit critically and fastidiously -- biscuits and dried apples alternately from open boxes on the counter. 'It's lucky you've got in your winter stock, Harkutt'. The shrewd eyes of Mr. Harkutt, proprietor, glanced at the occupation of the speaker as if even his foresight might have its possible drawbacks, but he said nothing."

Very often in the strife between Realism and Romanticism





the short story writer adopts a middle course, selecting the better phases of both but siding with neither. As every normal life is subject to both influences, often at the same time; so the short story must show this, for "without true realism and genuine romanticism -- actuality and ideals -- good work was never done, nor did any writer ever rise to be an author".<sup>1</sup> Alike the romanticists and realists unite in attention to every small detail of setting. Realism, as a principle, does not mean describing real life as it is. This dictum applies especially to Harte, for he actually saw the things he has told us; but through the genius of his imagination they are transformed to pictures that fix themselves in our minds. His characters have a happy trick of returning to our thoughts as old friends for they are real with the reality of truth. "His personages belong to the mountains which they traverse and to the stars which shine down upon them."<sup>2</sup>

It was the originality and realism of Harte that deeply impressed Dickens. Forster relates in his Life that the early master found in The Luck of Roaring Camp and The Outcasts of Poker Flat "such subtle strokes of character as he had not anywhere else in late years discovered; the manner resembling himself, but the matter fresh to a degree that surprised him; the painting in all respects masterly, and the wild rude thing painted quite wonderful reality."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Fred. M. Baird, Lippincott. November, '94
  2. Blackwood, 191: 581-4
  3. Erskine, Leading American Novelists.



In this connection we should also note that Harte's memorable characters all bear the semblance of reality; Colonel Starbottle, John Oakhurst, Stumpy, Tennessee's Partner, and Miggles, according to their creator's own statement, have their fundamental characteristics in real life; if there are exaggerations in their portraits, it is but the slight heightening of colors or deeping of shades necessary to give the effect of reality. Even many of his minor characters, Yuba Bill, Sandy Morton, David Fogg, and McSnagley are faithfully and carefully portrayed. The untidiness, tawdriness and squalor of the mining camp, as back grounds for his lifelike characters, is as honestly depicted as is the sublime scenery of the West.

To bring out more clearly the nature of Harte's art, let us take up a more careful study of one or two of his most representative stories in which there is romance of atmosphere and realism of truth to the actual surroundings and characters involved. First, a survey of The Luck of Roaring Camp, as it is summarized in Blackwood's:<sup>1</sup> "It is a narrative of a short life -- that of a baby -- in one of those curious colonies of gold-diggers. It bears every evidence of being true to life, as a picture studied from the life might be expected to be. It is full of rude figures, without pretense at civilization even, much less refinement -- men without

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1. Blackwood. 110:422





conscience or restraint, careless in mind and body, rough as the rocks they work among; yet it is long since we have read of anything so touching. We are introduced into the camp at a moment of high excitement. The one wretched woman in the place, an abandoned creature, for whom no one pretends to have either respect or regard, dies in giving birth to a child. The child has a strange effect upon the men (note the gifts of the men). Nothing is softened in the picture -- there is no sentiment -- nobody is reminded of the innocence of his own cradle, as so many moralist-humorists would take pleasure in reminding him -- it grows a little cleaner, a little quieter, a little kinder. The christening of the baby furnishes a characteristic scene."

"Was ever a more vivid, more affecting picture drawn in fewer words! When we attempt to laugh we feel the lump in our throats. The artistic quality of this sketch, its original unlikeness to all current fiction and its appeal to humanity soon found a warm welcome among all classes of unsympathetic readers. There is no condemnation, nothing hidden, no sermon set forth. He rejects the didactic motive and shows only his instinct for story telling. Here we see groups of men apparently without emotion offering bets three to five that 'Sal' will pull through; then the door is opened by 'Stumpy' and we know 'Sal' had climbed, as it were, that rugged road that led to the stars, and so passed out of Roaring Camp, its sin and shame forever." That is the story; take it or leave it -- the author makes no effort to comment or explain.



In Tennessee's Partner the curious, tender and almost unequalled devotion is most touchingly drawn. The story is undeniably based on fact, as we learn from Fred M. Stocking in the description of the unparalleled friendship in actual life of Chamberlain and Chaffee.<sup>1</sup> We see the hand of the artist sketching Tennessee, as he makes a desperate dash for liberty, shoots right and left in the crowd at the Arcade Saloon, then speeds up Grizzly Canon, is captured, tried and condemned to die; then, "above all this etched on the dark firmament rose the Sierras, remote and passionless, crowned with remoter, passionless stars". In this story one feels the hero is one of the most original and appealing characters the writer has created. The donkey cart, the grave digging, the simple funeral speech affect us as real pathos; it is another phase of the early California life.

The question may be asked what gives these characters and stories of Harte such wonderful lasting power; no matter how many times they are reread you are gripped with the same feelings. Bret Harte himself truly believed it was his realism which drew the throngs of admirers to him. However, today we are wont to feel it was the idealized realism which makes us unable to forget the stories of his Western life, though he would not have recognized it probably as idealism, for he aimed to present fact, humorously, ironically, pathetically, and always for its own sake without any desire to

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1. Overland. 40:241





idealize his materials.<sup>1</sup> But with his artistic sensitiveness he could not do this by plain statement of facts; the picture glows and lives with his original touches.

In these living pictures there may be a slight flaw in the realism when he bestows upon all of his people virtue; but one soon discovers this virtue is usually a primitive one, and is rarely inconsistent with the other traits of the character portrayed.

After all, the people of Roaring Camp, Red Dog, and One Horse Gulch were men, not brutes; and Harte was not making them saintly characters when they stood by one another, or easily gave up life for a friend, a little child, or even a bedraggled woman. These men were not as bad as they seemed; and many a warm heart throbbed under the bowie knife and revolver.

This leads us to dwell a little on the other phase of Bret Harte's gifts -- Romanticism. Though his stories are too photographic to be forgotten, the kindly glow of romance, which the author has shed over them, makes them remain more vividly in our memories as beautifully painted pictures. For he was not a bare realist, a mere literary photographer. As he touched his scenes and lives with the artist's hand, they glowed like a thing of beauty. They seem to be hewed out of the very heart of humanity, and will live and flourish as long as romance lives. How true is the picture

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1. The Nation. 74:502





drawn in M'liss: -

"The long dry summer had come. As each fierce day seemed to burn itself out in little whiffs of pearl gray smoke on the mountain summits, and as the upspringing breeze scattered what might have been its red embers over the landscape, the green wave, which, in early spring, had upheaved above Smith's grave, grew sere and dry and hard. In those days, the master, strolling in the little churchyard of a Sabbath afternoon, was sometimes surprised to find a few wild flowers, plucked from the damp pine forest, scattered there, and oftener rude wreaths hung upon the little pine cross. Most of these wreaths were formed of a sweet-scented grass which the children loved to keep in their desk, entwined with the pompon-like plumes of the buckeye and syringa, the wood anemone, and here and there the master noticed the dark blue cowl of the monkshood or deadly aconite. One day during a walk, in crossing a wooded ridge, he came upon M'liss in the heart of the forest, perched upon a prostrate pine, on a fantastic throne, formed by hanging plumes of lifeless branches, her lap full of grasses and pine burrs, and crooning to the just Aristides, who sat humbly at her feet, one of the negro melodies of her younger life."

In his later stories Harte has allowed more romance to creep in his methods, while the atmosphere of his stories seems to have grown "more mellow and golden".<sup>1</sup>.

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1. Patee, American Literature since 1870.



When he has touched the sunny places in the lawless life, a glow of romance shimmers lightly over all his writing. The keynote of his characterization of this life is the concealment of emotion; we remember certain gamblers continued their game "the day that French Pete and Kanaka Joe shot each other to death over the bar in the front room."<sup>1</sup> Again, we may see the self restraint common to Bret Harte's people, when John Oakhurst, going out to shoot himself, suddenly stooped and kissed the Duchess and said "he was going as far as the Canon".<sup>2</sup> Once more, it appeals in the brave Miggles who unwaveringly does her duty.

In displaying this trait, we have no feeling "he is playing to the gallery"; for he suffuses his stories with a romantic atmosphere of charity, sweet, clear and wholesome. Perhaps in real life John Oakhurst would not have shot himself, or Mother Shipton slowly starved herself to death to save provisions for the innocent boy and girl -- but the author made it seem to us like the truth, and we are glad to look upon the stern reality of death through an idealizing haze of Romance. We feel, with Brander Matthews, that "Bret Harte cast the cloak of Romance over the shoulders of the Argonauts of '49; and what he sought to do for the early Californian, other writers have striven to do for later inhabitants of the United States."<sup>3</sup> But to this day he has not been surpassed in delicacy

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1. Bret Harte, The Luck of Roaring Camp.

2. Bret Harte, Outcasts of Poker Flat.

3. Brander Matthews, Munsey. 1906





and crispness of phrase or charm of portrayal. The world which he has given to us most generously was lawless, picturesque, elemental, but withal chivalrous.

Tired readers turned with eagerness to all his glowing stories for something new, something different, something vigorous. Endowed with the gifts of the realist, the romanticist, and the idealist, and, having used them with great power, he might well be called a Rediscoverer of America. With the possible exception of Mark Twain no name in American Literature is better known the world over than that of Bret Harte.<sup>1</sup> In his realistic methods, subdued with a romantic glow, he marks the beginning of what has come to be known as the story of Real American Life.

In studying this realism and romanticism of Bret Harte, one instinctively feels that in creating his effects the writer depended largely upon local color. First, what is local color? A good, tentative definition has been offered by Hale and Dawson in The Elements of the Short Story:<sup>2</sup> It is that part of the story which produces the spirit of the place rendering the setting unique. When put to its best use, local color is that part which paints a picture, not merely for the picture, but to secure a background or atmosphere bearing a direct relation to character and action." In

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1. Current Literature. 32:644

2. Hale and Dawson, The Elements of the Short Story. New York, 1915



following this definition we learn the true local color story is one which could not have been set in any other place without radically changing and thus destroying the effect of the story as a whole.

To tell a story effectively, the writer must be thoroughly acquainted with the very heart of the life which he is portraying. Hence, it is rather difficult for an author to obtain accurate knowledge of more than one or two localities. A survey of the work of some of the most successful writers illustrates this point; Dickens' studies of the London streets, Trollope's studies of life in a cathedral town, Gilbert Parker's great Northwest, Hardy's Wessex, Garland's Central West, Cable's South, and Sarah Orne Jewett's New England.

Without blindly indulging in the use of local color, one must be sufficiently accurate in suggesting facts. A writing should not be over-crowded with local color; but certain individualistic ideas must be given a predominating tone. "If the book be of the sea, then the prevailing influence -- the atmosphere must be of the sea. The artist whether he is painter, architect or writer of fiction, must throw over all his pictures the feeling of environment<sup>1</sup>. Thus, the writer produces a vivid impression of his place: the surroundings, dress, manner and general characteristics of his people.

The widening appreciation of the use of local color shows a national growth by its increase of specific knowledge. In aiding

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1. Critic, Gilbert Parker. p. 466, December, 1898





this growth the stories of Kjelland, Auerbach, Barrie, Harte and London, with their bright touch or unique atmosphere, have extended our knowledge of the ways and habits of the various sections of the country. Local color has played a sufficiently important part in the development of fiction ever since the time of Scott. In fact, nearly all writers of the 19th century fiction have made use of it, in a greater or lesser degree, to stamp their writings with the mark of reality. But the pursuit of local color and local types is a comparatively new device. To suggest a locality with a few pertinent words is not a difficult trick, but to show this locality throughout the story as a part of its soul and texture, can be done only when a strong feeling for this special locality lies, in the words of Stevenson, "at the bottom of it".

This feeling for local color did not assume a distinctly American tone until Bret Harte capitalized the life of the Western mining camp where law was a matter of personal opinion. The scenery and society of this country had never before been revealed in such graphic expressions as those of Bret Harte; he paints in swiftly with powerful stroke, "the stormy skies, sombre gorge, rocking spinning coach, huge dark form of Yuba Bill".<sup>1</sup> It is true that his stories describe the life of a remote region, and of a rude frontier life; but the same characteristics appear true in every people. Now the disappearance of the "Old West" has made it impos-

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1. Critic. 41:170





sible that any writer should know or write of the miners and plains-people, as he has written of them.

Bret Harte acted as a "fore-runner" of the local colorists -- with him local color was a means rather than an end. Following Harte closely came a great outburst of local color fiction: - The Hoosier School-master; Cape Cod Folks; Deep Haven; Old Creole Days, In Tennessee Mountains, were a beginning; then for nearly a quarter of a century the predominant note of American fiction is the study of local scenes, types, and peculiar dialects.<sup>1</sup> This pursuit appeared to be of such literary value that many later writers overestimating its efficiency, overworked the setting at the expense of character and plot, and thus resolved the local color story into simply a descriptive sketch.

While most of Harte's tales depict the life and color on the Western coast in the early days, he has also given us local touches of the Atlantic States and England. Bret Harte got his California and Californians by unconscious absorption, while the works of his later years of more foreign substance reveal some conscious observation.<sup>2</sup>

In discussing this phase of his work, Mr. William Winter has said: "He drew from life, but he was an artist, not a copyist. Within his peculiar field he was as distinctive as Edgar A. Poe, and within that field he had no rival."<sup>3</sup> It is very evident that

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1. Pattee, American Literature since 1870.

2. Moulton Library of Criticism by Mark Twain.

3. Pemberton, Life of Bret Harte, p. 342



The Luck of Roaring Camp (1868) in the Overland Monthly was written with the deliberate intention to reveal a local and peculiar type of life -- it was the first great picture of the land of Bret Harte, and thus it was rejected by its own characters.

While it is true that many critics say the California with its extravagant coloring and flagrant life as pictured by Harte could never have existed, still we know he did not attempt to photograph, but to paint with an artistic touch the various realities about him. Can one imagine a more convincing picture in modern narration than Tennessee's Partner?

There was a tap at the door, and "it was said Tennessee's Partner was there on behalf of the prisoner; he was admitted at once without question. Perhaps the younger members of the jury, to whom the proceedings were becoming irksomely thoughtful, hailed him as a relief.

"For he was not, certainly, an imposing figure. Short and stout, with a square face, sunburned into a preternatural redness, clad in a loose duck 'jumper' and trousers streaked and splashed with red soil, his aspect under any circumstances would have been quaint, and was now even ridiculous. As he stooped to deposit at his feet a heavy carpet bag he was carrying, it became obvious, from partially developed legends and inscriptions, that the material with which his trousers had been patched had been originally intended for a less ambitious covering; yet he advanced





with great gravity, and after shaking the hand of each person in the room with labored cordiality, he wiped his ærious, perplexed face on a red bandana, a shade lighter than his complexion, laid his powerful hand upon the table to steady himself, and thus addressed the Judge: -

"'I was passin' by', he began, by way of apology, 'and I thought I'd just step in and see how things was gittin' on with Tennessee thar -- my pardner. It's a hot night. I disremember any sich weather before on the Bar.'

"He paused a moment, but nobody volunteering any other meteorological recollection, he again had recourse to his pocket-handkerchief, and for some moments mopped his face diligently.

"'Have you anything to say on behalf of the prisoner?' said the Judge finally.

"'Thet's it,' said Tennessee's Partner, in a tone of relief. 'I come yar as Tennessee's Pardner --, knowing him nigh on four year, off and on, wet and dry, in luck and out o' luck. His ways ain't aller my ways, but thar ain't any p'int in that young man, thar ain't any liveliness as he's been up to, as I don't know. And you sez to me, sez you -- confidential-like, and between man and man -- sez you, Do you know anything in his behalf? and I sez to you, sez I -- confidential-like, as between man and man -- What should a man know of his pardner?'"

. . . . .



"To come down to the bed-rock, it's just this: Tennessee, thar, has played it pretty rough and expensive-like on a stranger, and on this yer camp. And now, what's the fair thing? Some would say more, some would say less. Here's seventeen hundred dollars in coarse gold and a watch -- it's about all my pile -- and call it square!' And before a hand could be raised to prevent him, he had emptied the contents of the carpet bag upon the table."

These glimpses of old human nature, revealing itself strangely in the midst of barbarism, lawlessness, and license, are romantically true. Bret Harte saw the early California life, and gave it to us with its proper costume and accent; of course, he did this artistically.

In order to produce true local color, writers have necessarily had to perfect themselves in the accurate use of dialect. The dialect must ring true to the locality, or the effect vanishes. Not even in this rather difficult task has Bret Harte failed us, for his dialect in Western, Eastern, and foreign stories<sup>1</sup> is well nigh flawless. With its typical Scotch setting, A Rose of Glenbogie easily exemplifies this fact:

"'Ye'll be goin' to Glenbogie House, I'm thinkin'?' he said moodily.

"The consul said that he was.

"'I kenned it. Ye'll no be gettin' any machine to tak' ye there. They'll be sending a carriage for ye -- if ye're expected.

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1. Chapter II on dialect.





He glanced half doubtfully at the consul as if he was not quite so sure of it. But the consul believed he was expected, and felt relieved at the certain prospect of a conveyance. The porter meanwhile surveyed him moodily.

"'Ye'll be seein' Mistress MacSpaddan there!'

"The consul was surprised into a little over-consciousness. Mrs. MacSpaddan was a vivacious acquaintance at St. Kentigern, whom he certainly -- and not without some satisfaction -- expected to meet at Glenbogie House. He raised his eyes inquiringly at the porter's:

"'Ye'll no be rememberin' me. I had a machine in St. Kentigern and drove ye to MacSpaddan's ferry often. Far, far too often! She's a strange flagrantitious creature; her husband's but a puir fule, I'm thinkin', and ye did yersel' nae guid gaunin' there.'"

Another touch of color the artist loved to use on his canvas was the Spanish country for background, with its Spanish names and traditions, intermingled with contrasting colors of the Virginian, New Englander, and Mexican. In these Spanish scenes, as in practically all his stories, Harte has given us local color through the great out-doors. Very seldom does he allow his story to grow within the narrow confines of walls. When Nature solves man's petty troubles we feel she deals with justice; Deaths are tragedies only when hampered by human hands. We unconsciously feel





this in the unassuming and fitting deaths of John Oakhurst, Kentuck, and Tennessee. But at the same time in his graphic depiction of local color we feel with Pattee: "Everywhere there is the atmosphere of the theatre. The painted backgrounds are marvels of skill. There are vast color effects and picturesque tableaux.....the breath of life in his works all came from the new life of the West."<sup>1</sup>.

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1. Pattee, American Literature since 1870.



### Estimate

In estimating the value of Bret Harte's work, one must remember that to him was given the privilege of breaking new ground; he was the earliest literary pioneer to see deeply into this wild, picturesque life and to give to his visions an effective embodiment of the far Western land; the first to interpret the primitive life in its true unconventionality, comedies and pathetic tragedies. As a result the reader is constantly impressed with his splendid dramatic instinct, his keen insight into character, and his clever and pervasive humor. It is through his careful observation and painstaking delineation that many of his stories have become, and will always remain "symbols of the human heart". By this means his stories are a legacy to the world, as full of inspiration as of real entertainment.

In his selection of material from this Western chaos, we owe him a debt of gratitude. It would be just as impossible to find Bret Harte taking sides against the oppressed, as it would be to imagine him, the immaculate, doing his work in a careless, slovenly manner.

Certain phases of life -- especially of the days of the gold rush -- he knew intimately and well; but, taking his work as a whole, we must confess that he lacked a profound knowledge of human nature. He was not especially interested in depicting a





type, but in giving some of the personal traits of characters whom he knew. According to most standards, the ideal story writer should be able to depict in one man the nature of all men. In this respect Shakespeare and Thackeray pre-eminently succeed; while Hawthorne and Harte failed. But they failed for vastly different reasons; although Hawthorne possessed a great knowledge of human nature he could not grasp the individuality which gives the living qualities to Harte's immortal children. When Hawthorne reflected, Harte minutely observed.

Again, the idealized beauty of some of Harte's characters may be called a defect. He gives them credit for great personal beauty: "they were singularly handsome to a man". He did not feel it necessary to make them absurd or villainous in appearance to be contemptible. Indeed, he held a rather unusual attitude toward his characters -- he took for granted pioneers had the instincts of gentlemen and the courage of heroes. His heroes are men whom women adore. His characters are to him ordinary people placed in exceptional circumstance, to be covered with a thin veil of sentiment.

To those who have criticized his works for a rather patent and over-insistent striving for moral effects, we may quote the simple earnest words he gives in his own defense.

"He has been repeatedly cautioned, kindly and unkindly, intelligently and unintelligently, against his alleged tendency to confuse recognized standards of morality by extenuating lives of



recklessness and often criminality, with a single solitary virtue. He might easily show that he has never written a sermon, that he has never moralized or commented upon the actions of his heroes, that he has never voiced a creed or obtrusively demonstrated an ethical opinion. He might easily allege that this merciful effect of his art arose from the reader's weak human sympathies, and holds himself irresponsible. But he would be conscious of a more miserable weakness in thus divorcing himself from his fellowmen who in the domain of art must ever walk hand in hand with him. So he prefers to say that of all the various forms in which Cant presents itself to suffering humanity, he knows of none so outrageous, so illogical, so undemonstrable, so marvellously absurd as the Cant of 'Too Much Mercy'. When it shall be proven to him that communities are degraded and brought to guilt and crime, suffering or destitution, from a predominance of this quality; when he shall see pardoned ticket-of-leave men elbowing men of austere lives out of situation and position, and the repentant Magdalen supplanting the blameless virgin in society, then he will lay aside his pen and extend his hand to the new Draconian discipline in fiction. But until then he will, without claiming to be a religious man or a moralist, but simply as an artist, reverently and humbly conform to the rules laid down by a Great Poet, who created the parable of the 'Prodigal Son' and the 'Good Samaritan' -- whose works have lasted eighteen





hundred years, and will remain when the present writer and his generation are forgotten. As he is conscious of uttering no original doctrine in this, but of only voicing the beliefs of a few of his literary brethren happily living, and one gloriously dead, who never made proclamation of this 'from the housetops'." <sup>1</sup>.

Indeed, sympathy with the weakness, tragedies, and redeeming virtues of human nature strikes the keynote of this master's work. Harte has a lesson for us in spite of his statement to the contrary; it is the old gospel of Belief in Humanity. From all this comes his wonderful blending of humor and pathos. He used sparingly his natural gift of satire, carefully softening it with his kindly humor. The only real satire in his pages is aimed at hypocrisy, a fault he could not overlook. He has dealt with this failing of the Puritanic New Englander with surprising bitterness, in The Argonauts of North Liberty. In this story Joan, the Connecticut woman, represents "what Bret Harte hated more than anything else in the world; namely, a narrow, censorious, hypocritical, cold-blooded Puritanism. Joan combines a prim, provincial horsehair-sofa respectability with a lawless and sensual nature -- an odd combination, and yet not an impossible one." <sup>2</sup>. Possibly Hawthorne has immortalized the male of this species in Judge Pyncheon." <sup>2</sup>. Again, we catch this same attitude in the jovial, hypocritically effusive

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1. Pemberton, Life of Bret Harte. p. 343-44

2. Merwin, Life of Bret Harte. p. 245





Parson Wynn of The Carquinez Woods, when he greets an embarrassed convert with these boisterous words:-

"Good-by, good-by, Charley, my boy, and keep in the right path; not up or down, or round the gulch, you know, ha, ha! but straight across lots to the shining gate."

"He had raised his voice under the stimulus of a few admiring spectators, and backed his convert playfully against the wall. 'You see! We're goin' in to win, you bet. Good-by! I'd ask to step in and have a chat, but I've got my work to do, and so have you. The gospel mustn't keep us from that, must it, Charley? Ha, Ha!'"

As to the true value of his humor, G. K. Chesterton, in his Varied Types has aptly given his honest praise of the real humor of this American story teller: -

"There are more than 999 excellent reasons for admiring the work of Bret Harte. 'But one supreme reason stands out in a certain general superiority to them all -- a reason which may be stated in three propositions united in a common conclusion: first, that he was a genuine American; second, he was a genuine humorist; and third, he was not an American humorist.'")

(American humor is purely exaggerative, while Harte's humor was essentially his own, sympathetic and analytical,) of a unique flavor unrivalled by any other author.

Attention was first attracted to his genuine humor with the appearance of his clever Condensed Novels -- his gift for parody



involved remarkable technical skill and real appreciation." But it was not until the praise of the cultured East welcomed Bret Harte as a "rising star in a new literature", that he was granted favor, in any degree, among his own people; for as Brander Matthews phrases an old maxim, "A humorist is often without honor in his own country." By that time he had left California forever.

The humor in Harte is largely Western; it rings true in his conversation; the atmosphere of this humor shimmers through all his stories. He is truly a great humorist, but his fun has no sting; it is of the quiet, sympathetic kind which takes in pathos, disappointments, and even real grief in its view of the world. There is never merriment but constant ripples of fun; for his kind heart laughed with his people, not at them. Can any one help enjoying the unaffectedly humorous speeches of the crude but altogether likeable Yuba Bill in An Ingenue of the Sierras: -

"'You ain't uneasy about anything, Bill, are you?' asked the Expressman confidentially. Bill lifted his eyes with a slightly contemptuous surprise. 'Not about anything ter come. It's what hez happened that I don't exackly sabe. I don't see no signs of Ramon's gang ever havin' been out at all, and ef they were out I don't see why they didn't go for us.'

"'The simple fact is that our ruse was successful,' said an outside passenger. 'They waited to see our lights on the ridge, and, not seeing them, missed us until we had passed. That's my opinion.'





"'You ain't puttin' any price on that opinion, air ye?' inquired Bill politely.

"'No.'

"'Cos thar's a comic paper in Frisco pays for them things, and I've seen worse things in it.'

Then, later in the story we feel real pride with Bill in his records when he tells us:

"'Well, it means that this yer coach was passed through free tonight.'

"'You don't object to that -- surely? I think we were deucedly lucky.'

"Bill slowly drew off his other glove. 'I've been riskin' my everlastin' life on this d....d line three times a week,' he said with mock humility, 'and I'm allus thankful for small mercies. But,' he added grimly, 'When it comes down to being passed free by some pal of a hoss thief, and thet called a speshal Providence, I ain't in it! No, sir, I ain't in it.'"

Again, we can almost see the smile of Bret Harte when he tells us how Jack Hamlin taught the parson and his followers to play poker, and allowed him to rake in the whole pile: -

"'The parson', said Jack slowly, 'hadn't a single pair in his hand. It was the stoniest, deadeast, neatest bluff I ever saw. And when he'd frightened off the last man who held out and laid that measly hand of his face down on that pile of kings, queens, and aces, and looked around the table as he raked in the pile, there



was a smile of humble self-righteousness on his face that was worth double the money.'"<sup>1</sup>.

This gift of humor never deserted him; by it he is able to reveal the personality of his characters and interpret the love of pioneer life to us, and we realize with Tennyson, "It is the authors, more than the diplomats, who make nations love one another."

One of the things for which we shall long remember Bret Harte, is his power of dialogue which is surpassed by no living writer. A few words sketch for us "Miggles" as his vivid fancy sees her, and then she sits down and talks exactly as such a woman would talk.<sup>2</sup>.

Moreover can one find more pathetic and touching humor than in Miggles's house covered with newspapers, when she says of herself and Jim, "'When we are sitting alone, I read him these things on the wall. Why, Lord,'" says Miggles with her old laugh again, 'I've read him the whole side of the house this winter.'"

With this splendid combination of talents, he has done much to hand down in literature the various phases and pictures of the life that were to be found in the great melting pot of Pioneer days. Who can describe our feelings of debt to Bret Harte, the American story teller, better than the words of the kind old German poet, Ferdinand Freiligrath: -

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1. Bret Harte, Convalescence of Jack Hamlin.

2. Nadal, North American Review. vol. 124, p. 81-85



"Nevertheless, he remains what he is -- the Californian and the gold-digger. But the gold for which he has dug, and which he has found, is not the gold in the bed of rivers, not the gold in the veins of mountains; it is the gold of love, of goodness, of fidelity, of humanity, which even in rude and wild hearts, even under the rubbish of vices and sins -- remains forever uneradicated from the human heart."

Can one find a more fitting close as a summary of the effect and value of all his great works, than in repeating his own beautiful words, On a Pen of Thomas Starr King: -

"The truth half-jesting, half in earnest flung;  
The word of cheer with recognition in it;  
The note of alms, whose golden speech outrung  
The golden gift within it."





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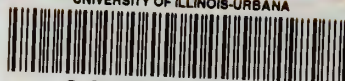
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